

What is claimed is:

1. An image forming system comprising:
 - a plurality of image forming apparatuses;
 - 5 a distributing apparatus that distributes image data to said plurality of image forming apparatuses;
 - a mark forming device provided in each of said plurality of image forming apparatuses, for forming at least one predetermined mark on a transfer material;
 - 10 a fixing device provided in each of said plurality of image forming apparatuses, for thermally fixing a toner image formed on the transfer material;
 - a detecting device provided in each of said plurality of image forming apparatuses, for detecting
 - 15 the predetermined mark formed on the transfer material;
 - and
 - a transfer device provided in said distributing apparatus, for adjusting sizes of images to be formed by respective ones of said plurality of image forming
 - 20 apparatuses according to the predetermined mark detected by the respective ones of said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and for transferring the images to the respective ones of said plurality of image forming apparatuses.
- 25 2. An image forming system according to claim 1, comprising a reduction ratio calculating device that calculates reduction ratios of transfer materials used

by respective ones of said plurality of image forming apparatuses according to the predetermined mark detected by the respective ones of said plurality of image forming apparatuses; and

5 wherein said transfer device selects a minimum value among the reduction ratios calculated by said reduction ratio calculating device and corresponding to the respective ones of said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and adjusts sizes of images to be formed by
10 the respective ones of said plurality of image forming apparatuses according to the selected minimum value.

3. An image forming system according to claim 2, wherein said reduction ratio calculating device is provided in each of said plurality of image forming
15 apparatuses.

4. An image forming system according to claim 2, wherein said reduction ratio calculating device is provided in said distributing apparatus.

5. An image forming system according to claim 1,
20 wherein said detecting device detects the predetermined mark formed on the transfer material at least after a temperature of the transfer material becomes equal to an ambient temperature after said fixing device thermally fixes the toner image of the predetermined mark formed
25 on the transfer material.

6. An image forming system according to claim 1, wherein said transfer device adjusts the sizes of images

to be formed by the respective ones of said plurality of image forming apparatuses according to the predetermined mark detected by the respective ones of said plurality of image forming apparatuses and an order in which the
5 predetermined mark is formed in a case where the predetermined mark is formed on both sides of the transfer material.

7. An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said mark forming device forms a plurality of
10 predetermined marks as the predetermined mark on the transfer material in a manner being arranged in a main scanning direction thereof, and detects the plurality of predetermined marks at a time.

8. An image forming apparatus according to claim
15 1, wherein said mark forming device forms a plurality of predetermined marks as the predetermined mark on the transfer material in a manner being arranged in a sub-scanning direction thereof, and detects the plurality of predetermined marks at different times.

20 9. An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said distributing apparatus is included one of said plurality of image forming apparatuses.

10. An image distribution apparatus for
distributing image data to a plurality of image forming
25 apparatuses connected to the image distribution apparatus, the image forming apparatuses each comprising a mark forming device that forms at least one

predetermined mark on a transfer material, a fixing device that thermally fixes a toner image formed on the transfer material, and a detecting device that detects the predetermined mark formed on the transfer material,
5 the image distribution apparatus comprising:

a transfer device that adjusts sizes of images to be formed by respective ones of the plurality of image forming apparatuses according to the predetermined mark detected by the detecting devices of the respective ones
10 of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, and transfers the images to the respective ones of the plurality of image forming apparatuses.

11. An image distribution apparatus according to claim 10, comprising a reduction ratio calculating
15 device that calculates reduction ratios of transfer materials to be used by respective ones of the plurality of image forming apparatuses according to the predetermined mark detected by the respective ones of the plurality of image forming apparatuses; and

20 wherein said transfer device selects a minimum value among the reduction ratios calculated by said reduction ratio calculating device and corresponding to the respective ones of the image forming apparatuses, and adjusts sizes of images to be formed by the
25 respective ones of the plurality of image forming apparatuses according to the selected minimum value.

12. An image distribution apparatus according to

claim 10, wherein said transfer device adjusts the sizes of images to be formed by the respective ones of the plurality of image forming apparatuses according to the predetermined mark detected by respective ones of the
5 plurality of image forming apparatuses, and an order in which the predetermined mark is formed in a case where the predetermined mark is formed on both sides of the transfer material.

13. An image distribution apparatus according to
10 claim 10, which is included in one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses.

14. An image forming method executed by an image forming system comprising a plurality of image forming apparatuses and a distributing apparatus that
15 distributes image data to the plurality of image forming apparatuses, comprising the steps of:

a mark forming step of causing each of the plurality of image forming apparatuses to form at least one predetermined mark on a transfer material;
20 a fixing step of causing each of the plurality of image forming apparatuses to thermally fix a toner image formed on the transfer material;

a detecting step of causing each of the plurality of image forming apparatuses to detect the predetermined
25 mark formed and thermally fixed on the transfer material; and

a transfer step of causing the distributing

apparatus to adjust sizes of images to be formed by
respective ones of the plurality of image forming
apparatuses according to the predetermined mark detected
by the respective ones of the plurality of image forming
5 apparatuses, and transfer the images to the plurality of
image forming apparatuses.

15. An image forming method according to claim 14,
comprising a reduction ratio calculating step of
calculating reduction ratios of transfer materials used
10 by respective ones of the plurality of image forming
apparatuses according to the predetermined mark detected
by the respective ones of the plurality of image forming
apparatuses; and

wherein said transfer step comprises selecting a
15 minimum value among the calculated reduction ratios and
corresponding to the respective ones of the plurality of
image forming apparatuses in said reduction ratio
calculating step, and adjusting sizes of images to be
formed by respective ones of the plurality of image
20 forming apparatuses according to the selected minimum
value.

16. An image forming method according to claim 15,
wherein said reduction ratio calculating step is
executed by each of the plurality of image forming
25 apparatuses.

17. An image forming method according to claim 15,
wherein said reduction ratio calculating step is

executed by the distributing apparatus.

18. An image forming method according to claim 14,
wherein said detecting step comprises detecting the
predetermined mark formed on the transfer material at
5 least after a temperature of the transfer material
becomes equal to an ambient temperature after the toner
image of the predetermined mark formed on the transfer
material is thermally fixed in said fixing step.

19. An image forming method according to claim 14,
10 wherein said transfer step comprises adjusting the sizes
of images to be formed by the respective ones of the
plurality of image forming apparatuses according to the
predetermined mark detected by respective ones of the
plurality of image forming apparatuses and an order in
15 which the predetermined mark is formed in a case where
the predetermined mark is formed on both sides of the
transfer material.

20. An image forming method according to claim 14,
wherein said mark forming step comprises forming a
20 plurality of predetermined marks as the predetermined
mark on the transfer material in a manner being arranged
in a main scanning direction thereof, and said detecting
step comprises detecting the plurality of predetermined
marks at a time.

25 21. An image forming method according to claim 14,
wherein said mark forming step comprises forming a
plurality of predetermined marks as the predetermined

mark on the transfer material in a manner being arranged in a sub-scanning direction thereof, and said detecting step comprises detecting the plurality of predetermined marks at different times.